

Food Labels

Understanding Food Labels for Food Allergies

The current Food Standards Code requires that the most common allergens, peanuts, tree nuts (e.g. cashews, almonds, walnuts), shellfish, fish, cow's milk, eggs, sesame and soybean must be declared on the food label if they are present in a food, even if present in only small amounts. Whilst gluten (not wheat) must also be declared on the label, wheat allergic individuals need to be careful to avoid all wheat ingredients (not just gluten).

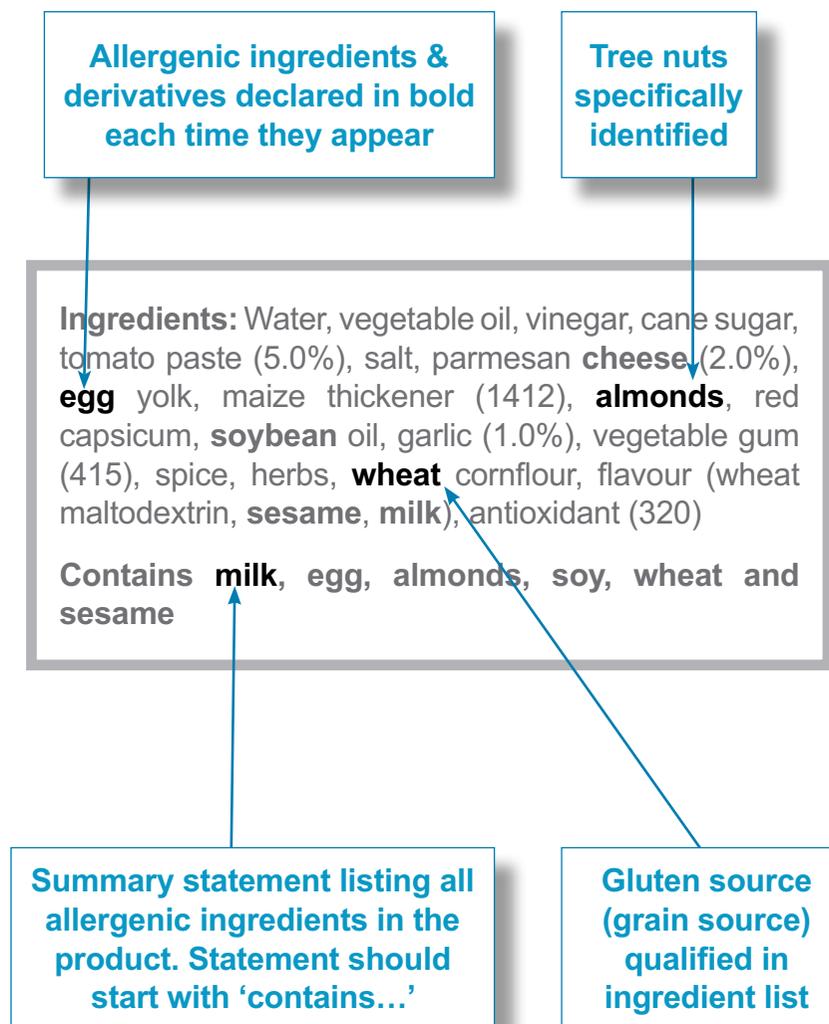
The Food Standards Code also requires a warning statement on foods where people may be unaware of a severe health risk posed by an allergen in a food. An example of this is food containing the bee product royal jelly, which may cause severe allergic reactions, particularly in asthma and allergy sufferers.

To the right is an example of how food allergens are often declared on a food label.

What about precautionary statements?

Some labels include "may contain..." statements for allergens (e.g. "may contain traces of peanuts and tree nuts"). Manufacturers may add these precautionary statements to food labels if there may be traces of the allergen present. This can be due, for example, to shared equipment or cross contamination in the handling or storage of ingredients. It is important to note that these precautionary statements are voluntary.

Some individuals are extremely sensitive and even trace amounts can cause allergic reactions. Therefore, schools and child care services should not give students, known to be allergic to a food allergen, a product that contains a precautionary statement for that allergen, unless permission has been given by the parent/guardian for that food.



The following information has been provided by Anaphylaxis Australia Inc. www.allergyfacts.org.au

Please note: This is not a complete or comprehensive list of ingredients to avoid but is intended as a helpful aid. It is NOT meant to replace medical advice.

Ingredients to avoid if you are:

Allergic to peanut

Arachis oil, Beer nuts, Goober nuts, Groundnuts, Madelonas, Mixed nuts, Monkey Nuts, Nu-nuts, Nut pieces, Nutmeat, Peanut, Peanut butter, Peanut oil (cold pressed, expelled or extruded), Peanut sprouts.

Any products containing peanut or peanut derivatives must be avoided (e.g. peanut flour, sodium peanutate, and peanutamide).

Allergic to tree nuts

Almonds, Artificial nuts, Brazil nuts, Carponata, Cashews, Gianduja (a nut mix), Hazelnuts/Filberts, Hickory nuts, Indian nuts, Macadamia nuts, Marzipan/Almond paste, Non-gai nuts, Natural nut extract, Pecans/Mashuga nuts, Pine nuts*, Pistachios, Pralines, Shea nuts, Walnuts.

* Pine nuts are also known as: pinyon, pignoli, pignollia, pinon and pignon. Any food containing nut or nut derivatives must be avoided (e.g. nut butters, nut meal, nut oil).

Allergic to egg

Albumen, Apovitellin, Avidin, Binder, Dried eggs, Egg, Egg solids, Egg substitutes (some), Egg white, Egg white solids, Egg yolk, Flovoproteins, Glaze (on baked goods), Globulin, Imitation egg product, Livetin, Lysozyme, Meringue mix, Ovalbumin, Ovglycoprotein, Ovomuroid, Ovomuxiod, Powdered egg.

Allergic to sesame

Benne, Benniseed, Gingelly seeds, Sesame, Sesame seed, Sesarmol, Sesomolina, Sim sim, Tahina, Tahini, Til.

Allergic to milk

Ammonium caseinate, Butter/Butter fat, Calcium caseinate, Casein, Casein hydrolysate, Caseinates, Cheese, Cream, Cultured buttermilk, Curds, Delactosed whey, Ghee, Hydrolysed casein, Hydrolysed whey, Immitation milk, Lactalbumin, Lactalbumin phosphate, Lacto acidophilus, Magnesium caseinate, Malted milk, Milk*, Nougat, Skim milk, Potassium caseinate, Protein hydrolysate, Rennet, Sodium caseinate, Sweet whey, Whey protein, Whey solids, Whey/Whey powder, Whitener, Yoghurt.

* Any product containing the word milk from an animal source must be avoided (e.g. goat milk). NB: Lactose does not normally contain the protein that causes reactions, but there may be a risk of contamination with milk protein. Lactose found in medication is generally safe.

Allergic to soy

Bean curd, Endamame, Hydrolysed plant protein, Hydrolysed soy protein, Hydrolysed vegetable protein, Miso, Natto, Okara, Soja, Soy, Soya, Soyabean, Soybean, Tamri, Tempeh, Textured vegetable protein, Tofu, Yuba.

Allergic to wheat

Bran, Breadcrumbs, Bulgar, Couscous, Cracker meal, Farina, Flour[^], Gluten, Kamut, Matzoh, Pasta, Seitan, Semolina, Spelt, Tabouleh, Triticale, Wheat[^], Whole wheat berries.

[^] All-purpose, bread, durum, cake, enriched, high gluten, high protein instant, multigrain, pastry, plain, self-raising, soft wheat, steel ground, stone ground, whole meal, whole wheat.

^{*} Bran, germ, flakes, sprouts, cornflour

Further information:

WA Department of Health
www.health.wa.gov.au/anaphylaxis

Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA)
www.allergy.org.au

Anaphylaxis Australia
www.allergyfacts.org.au

Food Standards Australia New Zealand
www.foodstandards.gov.au



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